

## Trustees Release Draft Joint Restoration Plan

By Greg Swanson, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

The draft joint restoration plan and environmental assessment for the Lower Fox River and Green Bay area was released for public review and comment on September 19 by the Lower Fox River and Green Bay Watershed Trustee Council. The plan and assessment is the second of three steps in the process of restoring natural resources that have been injured by the release of contaminants into the environment. The Trustee Council is composed of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, representing the federal agencies; the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources; the Michigan Attorney General; the Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin; and the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin.

According to Colette Charbonneau, FWS Restoration Coordinator in Green Bay, "The restoration plan is being developed before the final resolution of natural resource damage claims so that existing settlement funds can be used to implement restoration projects as soon as possible."

The restoration plan and environmental assessment are not intended to quantify the cost or project scope



*The Fox River, framed by the Highway 172 Bridge, offers many opportunities for habitat restoration.*

## Historic Study Begins This Month

By Susan Pastor, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

A study to assure that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources comply with a federal law dealing with historic preservation obligations will begin later this month.

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**Draft Restoration Plan** *from Page 1*

of the restoration projects to be done. Charbonneau added, "The scale of restoration activity that results from this plan depends on the funds, property and services that will become available through the settlement of natural resource damage claims. As the trustees receive settlement funds from each of the potentially responsible parties, this plan will be supplemented, if the trustees determine there is a need to adjust the priorities and/or criteria for alternatives."

Three possible alternatives were analyzed for possible action. Alternative A is the no-action alternative, in which the trustees would not take any action to restore injured natural resources or compensate the public losses for ongoing natural resource injuries. This alternative is required by law for consideration and serves as a baseline against which the other alternatives can be compared. Alternatives B and C are alike except in the size of the geographic area they address.

The plan proposes the criteria and priorities for restoration project categories under alternatives B and C. Preference will be given to projects that are not already being implemented or have no planned funding under other programs. Although the trustees will use restoration planning efforts completed by other programs, projects that would not otherwise be completed without natural resource damage assessment restoration funds will be given preference. Whenever possible, self-sustaining and essential natural habitat functions will be restored or enhanced and protected. Projects that provide long-term benefits that begin immediately after project implementation are also preferred. Another important criterion is the selection of restoration projects that provide a broad scope of measurable benefits to a wide area or population. Projects that benefit more than one injured natural resource will also be given priority.

Additionally, projects that use proven, reliable methods are preferred, as are those that have a high benefit to cost ratio. Because cultural resources are important to the trustees, projects will be evaluated in light of their cultural importance to the Indian tribes of the area or other cultural groups. Cultural

resources include historic, archaeological and sacred sites; artifacts and traditional cultural items and properties; and buildings and structures. The evaluation process of these cultural resources is discussed in the historic study article beginning on Page 1.

It is also important to note that habitat preservation through acquisition of land or easements will only be from willing sellers or participants. Landowners will be under no obligation to sell to any of the governments associated with the trustees. Any property acquired will be purchased at fair market value as determined by established appraisal procedures.

Projects addressed in alternative B will be implemented only in the assessment area and will be prioritized in this geographic order: the 39 miles of the Lower Fox River; the adjacent floodplains and associated uplands; and all of Green Bay and its adjacent coastal wetlands and tributaries upstream to the first impoundment for the river and bay, including the adjacent floodplains and ecologically associated uplands. The key factors influencing the geographical priorities are proximity to the river and bay, the quality of restoration opportunities, similarity to resources damaged or lost, and cost effectiveness.

The natural resource-based restoration projects include activities such as wetland restoration or preservation, aquatic habitat quality improvement projects to restore and enhance aquatic habitat and public recreational services, and direct resource restoration projects.

The trustees' initial goal for wetland and upland habitat preservation is to preserve approximately 9,900 acres and reestablish or enhance approximately 3,300 acres in the Lower Fox River and Green Bay environment. In terms of fishery resource enhancement projects, the trustees' goals are self-sustaining fish populations and a healthy fish community in the Lower Fox River and Green Bay environment. For aquatic and near-shore habitat improvement projects, the trustees' goal is the

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## Historic Study from Page 1

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The law, the National Historic Preservation Act, requires that a study or series of studies be done to document cultural resources and areas of cultural sensitivity at or near federally funded projects. Although the DNR is the lead agency for the site's proposed plan, remedial investigation/feasibility study and final decision document, EPA is the lead agency for the historic preservation study. Information collected along the Fox River and the lower portion of Green Bay will be used to develop options to minimize effects on historic areas.

EPA Remedial Project Manager Jim Hahnenberg said he fully expects the study to uncover something that will be considered historic.

"We expect to find some resources in the river and bay that we will need to be concerned about," he said. "It is probably one of the most historic areas in the state because it goes way back."

The study, called a Stage IA Cultural Resources Survey, will involve a literature search, analysis of documentation from the state historic preservation officer, local historical and archeological societies, libraries, museums and universities, and a field trip to become familiar with the area. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will be doing the study through an agreement with EPA. Hahnenberg selected the Corps because it has staff experienced in and knowledgeable about the act. He said the study should take about two months to complete.

"They will be looking for historical things that people would value, like locks and dams, and Indian settlements," Hahnenberg explained. "The odds are pretty good that they would not impede our cleanup if we can avoid them. This survey will ensure that we can avoid them and keep us from making mistakes."

If something of a historic nature is discovered, additional surveys called Stage IB and Stage II will follow as required under the federal act. "If we determine that we have certain areas to worry about, we will want to make sure they are unavoidable," added Hahnenberg.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE WISCONSIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY WEB SITE.

*Perhaps EPA will find a sunken shipwreck similar to the Pretoria shown above. Wisconsin Historical Society Archeologist Russ Green secures its boiler.*

Hahnenberg was involved with a similar survey that uncovered remnants of an Indian camp in New Jersey while working for EPA's New York office several years ago. He added that he would not be surprised if a Stage IB survey were needed for the Fox River. "You have the greatest potential for historic resources near waterways."

A Stage IA survey was recently done for the Hudson River in New York. Several cultural resources were found which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places or have been determined to be eligible for the National Register. They are also located within 2,000 feet of the banks of the Upper Hudson River. According to the Hudson River's final decision document, there is also the potential for more historic sites in the immediate vicinity of the areas to be cleaned up. They may also be buried within the river sediment.

"The Hudson cultural resources survey is probably a lot like the one we would do for the Fox River, with quite an interesting history," Hahnenberg stated. "Like the Hudson, we will probably continue to build on the initial survey as the project progresses."

While a Stage IA survey is mostly a literature search, a Stage IB survey is more inclusive. "It entails a more in-depth look at the area, field surveys and testing," Hahnenberg stated. "An important part of this process

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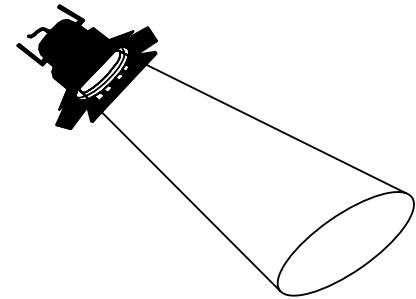
*See Historic Study, Page 5*



*In response to reader requests, the Fox River Current will regularly feature successful natural resource damage assessments similar to what may occur at the Lower Fox River.*

# Spotlight On:

## St. Lawrence Environment Cooperative Natural Resource Damage Assessment



By Susan Pastor, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Back in 1958, when General Motors was preparing to introduce the 1960 Chevrolet Corvair, GM built a 270-acre facility in upstate New York to produce the car's aluminum cylinder heads. From 1959 to 1974, GM used PCBs as a component of the hydraulic fluid used in its die-casting process. In the early 1960s, a reclamation system was installed to recover used fluid. However, PCBs were still occasionally landfilled and passed through on-site lagoons into the St. Lawrence River.



*Although a reclamation system was installed in the 1960s, PCBs were occasionally landfilled and passed through on-site lagoons into the St. Lawrence River.*

Nearby, Reynolds Metals Co. and the Aluminum Company of America used PCBs in their heat transfer systems while smelting aluminum. ALCOA discharged PCBs into the Grasse River and Reynolds Metals discharged PCBs into the Raquette River, as well as the St. Lawrence River. ALCOA, in operation since 1903, bought Reynolds in 2001 and still operates today.

Although PCBs were banned in 1977 and the companies are abiding by current environmental laws, the damage to the rivers had been done. EPA placed General Motors (Central Foundry Division) on its list of Superfund sites in 1984. Natural

resource trustees joined forces in 1991 to start negotiating a settlement with these companies for restoration of lost or damaged resources. The trustees, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, State of New York, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, have a memorandum of understanding with the companies and are now working on a negotiated settlement. Unlike a litigated natural resource damage assessment, a negotiated settlement involves all parties working together to agree to restoration projects, according to Anne Secord of the FWS New York field office.

"The companies and natural resource trustees work together," Secord explained. "We try to focus on issues that we can agree on. If we can't agree on an issue, we'll set it aside and hope to discuss it later."

While most trustees develop traditional damage assessments, negotiated settlements have been done for Superfund sites in Texas. "By cooperating in this way, we hope to avoid a lot of contentiousness," Secord continued. "We are trying to work together to agree to injury assessment methods and restoration projects. Everybody has to give and make some concessions."

Those working together on this project have technical, rather than legal, expertise. "We generally work together as a technical staff," Secord said. "We are looking at the ecological effects of PCBs on fish and birds, for example."

Secord, who is stationed in Cortland, N.Y., said the trustees are looking at a variety of restoration projects to address their particular concerns. The Mohawks are interested in being able to fish the rivers again. Since consumption advisories for the Grasse and St. Lawrence Rivers have been in effect for many years, subsistence and recreational fishing have been severely restricted. "It's had a pretty significant effect on the tribe," Secord stated. "The whole culture of fishing is disappearing up there."

The 15-year FWS employee added that projects under consideration for the tribe include restoration of "high quality medicinal and cultural use plants." Secord explained, "The restoration of sweet grass is important because the Mohawks are known for their sweet grass baskets. They also use plants to make medicines for ingestion, so if they are contaminated, they aren't considered usable."

Trustees are also looking at wetland and river enhancements to benefit fish and wildlife. Secord cannot estimate at this time how much the projects will eventually cost the companies, but she does have a time frame in mind. She concluded, "We hope to be done within the next five years."

For further information on the St. Lawrence Cooperative Natural Resource Damage Assessment, contact Anne Secord at (607) 753-9334 or at [anne\\_secord@fws.gov](mailto:anne_secord@fws.gov).



## Out and About...

By Greg Swanson, Wisconsin  
Department of Natural Resources

The Fox River Intergovernmental Partnership, made up of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin and Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin, regularly provides speakers to organizations in the Fox Valley area. The following partners recently made presentations:

### July

- ◆ *Tom Nelson, Oneida, Greg Hill, DNR, Colette Charbonneau, FWS: Remedial Action Plan Science Technical Advisory Committee, Green Bay; Georgia-Pacific consent decree and restoration plan update.*
- ◆ *Tom Nelson, Oneida, Greg Hill, DNR, Colette Charbonneau, FWS: Lower Fox River Partnership, Green Bay; Georgia-Pacific consent decree and restoration planning update.*

### Historic Study from Page 3

includes input by local interested parties who have knowledge about historical resources."

Hahnenberg added that it would be EPA's preference to merely go around historical areas, but realizes that may not always be possible. "We would have to take appropriate mitigation and compensate for it. For example, we would recover or replace the resource prior to starting the cleanup."

# Profile On . . . George Boronow

## Leads Lower Fox River Team

By Greg Swanson, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

When New Jersey native George Boronow started his professional career studying fisheries and the fish that inhabited them, he never imagined that that his choice would lead him to Green Bay and the Fox River. For the past three years, he has been the supervisor of the Lower Fox River team in the Northeast regional office of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. His team is directly responsible for overseeing the activities that relate to the cleanup and restoration of the Lower Fox River.

“Our team does much of the day-to-day, in the field work for the DNR in Green Bay and the Fox Valley on the cleanup and the natural resource restoration efforts,” said Boronow. “Our jobs have involved everything from the pilot dredging projects to helping select the most beneficial land purchases, environmental restoration and recreational projects in the Green Bay area.”

Boronow did his undergraduate studies at Maryville College in Tennessee, majoring in biology. He then went on to receive a master’s degree in zoology from the University of Tennessee. His masters’ thesis led him to study the 100-plus species of fish found in western Tennessee’s Forked Deer River. “While I was in grad school, I worked with the professor who discovered the first specimen of the snail darter, which eventually had major environmental consequences and stirred a national debate,” noted Boronow. “I was involved with the collection efforts for the snail darter in the Little Tennessee River.”

After finishing college, Boronow spent five years working for a Milwaukee-based consulting firm, eventually relocating to Wisconsin in 1976. He joined the DNR in 1979 as a fish manager for Racine, Kenosha and Walworth Counties in southeast Wisconsin. In 1986, he moved to Green Bay as a



*George Boronow*

fisheries supervisor for Green Bay and Lake Michigan and became supervisor for the Lower Fox River basin team in early 2000.

George and his family – his wife, son and two daughters – enjoy traveling and camping in their leisure time. “While we take as many opportunities as we can to travel around Wisconsin and the upper Midwest,” he continued, “we really look forward to our family camping trips out West.”

When asked about what he sees down the road for the Fox River, Boronow said, “I’m looking forward to getting to the point where we can begin the actual cleanup and restoration processes. I’d like everybody to be able to see the results of our hard work and be able to realize the true value of the Fox River and the bay.”



## Draft Restoration Plan *from Page 2*

protection, reestablishment or enhancement of approximately 12,000 acres of aquatic and near-shore habitat in the Lower Fox River and Green Bay. The category of natural resource-based public use enhancement projects includes improvements to outdoor recreational facilities at existing parks or the development of new parks associated with river or coastal habitat recreation, appreciation or education. The trustees will designate less than 10 percent of total settlement funds to implement improvements in park facilities located in the Lower Fox River and Green Bay.

Alternative C, which is the proposed action, includes all the categories of projects outlined in alternative B over an expanded geographical area. That area is expanded to include the entire Lower Fox River and Green Bay watershed area, including the headwaters to the rivers and streams that flow into the Lower Fox River and Green Bay ecosystem. This area includes all or part of six counties in Michigan and all or part of 23 counties in Wisconsin, covering a total drainage basin of 6,349 square miles.

Charbonneau added, "Alternative C actions offer greater benefits for a number of environmental attributes addressed by the plan. Those increased

benefits affect wetlands, aquatic habitat, fish resources, wildlife resources, threatened or endangered species, cultural resources, surface water, and the cumulative impacts on Lake Michigan."

Copies of the Draft Joint Restoration Plan are available at the FWS Field Office, 1015 Challenger Court, Green Bay. To request a copy, call (920) 465-7440. Copies are also available for on-site review at the information repositories listed below.

Additionally, a copy for on-site review has been placed at the Escanaba Public Library in Escanaba, Mich. The document is also available online at <http://midwest.fws.gov/nepa>.

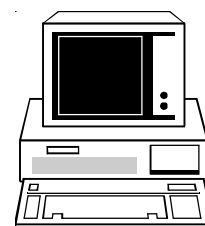
### Check out these Web sites:

<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/wm/lowerfox/>

<http://www.epa.gov/region5/foxriver/>

<http://www.fws.gov/r9dec/nrdar/nrdamain.html>

<http://www.fws.gov/r3pao/nrda/>



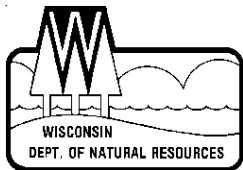
## Information Available at Local Libraries

The Intergovernmental Partners invite the public to review technical reports, fact sheets and other documents related to the Lower Fox River cleanup at information repositories set up in the reference sections of the following local libraries. Information repositories at the public libraries in DePere, Kaukauna, Little Chute, Neenah and Wrightstown have been discontinued. However, binders containing fact sheets will be mailed to and maintained at these locations as well as at the repositories listed below.

- **Appleton Public Library**, 225 N. Oneida St., Appleton, Wis.; (920) 832-6170
- **Brown County Library**, 515 Pine St., Green Bay, Wis.; (920) 448-4381, Ext. 394
- **Door County Library**, 107 S. Fourth Ave., Sturgeon Bay, Wis.; (920) 743-6578
- **Oneida Community Library**, 201 Elm St., Oneida, Wis.; (920) 869-2210
- **Oshkosh Public Library**, 106 Washington Ave., Oshkosh, Wis.; (920) 236-5200



*An administrative record, which contains detailed information upon which the selection of the final site cleanup plan will be based, is also available for review at two DNR offices: 801 E. Walnut St., Green Bay, Wis. and 101 S. Webster St., 3rd Floor, Madison, Wis. An administrative record is also available at the EPA Record Center, 77 W. Jackson Blvd., 7th Floor, Chicago, Ill.*



Prepared by the Fox River Intergovernmental Partnership: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin, Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Supporting agencies include the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services, the U.S. Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in these articles are solely those of the authors and are not necessarily shared by all members of the Fox River Intergovernmental Partnership.

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